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## THE CLASSICS AND SCIENCE

At the Classical Conference held at Ann Arbor in April, 1909, there was a Symposium on the Value of Humanistic, particularly Classical, Studies as a Training for Men of Affairs. Among the interesting contributions to this Symposium is an excellent letter from the Hon. James Bryce, who has written and spoken well and often in support of the Classics. Valuable also is the paper of Mr. Charles R. Williams, Editor of the Indianapolis Star, who presents many cogent reasons for belief in the value of the study of Greek and Latin.

I am, however, most interested in the article of Dr. Harvey W. Wiley on The Value of the Study of Greek and Latin as a Preparation for the Study of Science. Dr. Wiley sent a questionnaire to one hundred prominent scientific men, teachers and others, in the United States, in order to elicit information respecting their attitude toward the promotion of classical learning and their estimation of its value. Thirty-five replies were received, of which fourteen were favorable and seventeen unfavorable to the study of Latin and Greek. Four favored the study of Latin but not of Greek. Three thought a fair knowledge of the classical languages of no value as a basis for scientific studies; four thought such knowledge of very little value.

It is amazing to learn that nine of the thirty-five men of science think a knowledge of Latin and Greek is of no use in any science. Eight thought such knowledge would have no influence upon the style and expression of scientific writers; three thought the influence of such knowledge would be injurious.

One is furthermore astounded to discover that three prominent scientists think that a knowledge of Latin and Greek *hinders* the acquisition of a modern language and three think it is of *no help*, while two regard English as the best language to study as a basis.

Five are of the opinion that no special pleasure may be obtained from Latin and Greek Classics and five think that there is much more gratification to be obtained from an acquaintance with the great works in modern languages.

As a typical illustration of the attitude of those opposed to classical learning Dr. Wiley quotes a letter received from a Professor in a New England University:

It seems to me little short of ludicrous that anybody at the present age of progress should make an endeavor to reintroduce classical philology, particularly at a time when at such venerable seats of learning as Oxford and Cambridge determined efforts have been made to get rid of this incubus. How is it possible for anybody to fail to realize that the trend of science is ever toward mathematics, that in the next generation the demand for a mathematical equipment and the need of it will be increased tenfold? How is it possible to ignore

the fact that this is the direction in which specialization should be made, beginning at an early age, for the burden is continually heavier, and that this is precisely the direction in which nothing is being done. As for philological work, let us have English, French, German, Italian, etc., which not only have the same cultural value, but open to their possessors a world of life and learning and science. I can't answer your questions for they put me in a temper.

What shall we say of, or to, a scholar and teacher who calls the Classics an incubus, who thinks the modern languages have exactly the same cultural value as the Classics, and that the modern languages are to be preferred to the Classics because *they* open a world of life and learning and science? Further what are we to think of a *man of science* who, when asked for his serious opinions and judicious arguments, replies, "I can't answer your questions for they put me in a temper"! As Horace asks, *Quid facias illi?* Truly we can only say, as Matthew Arnold does with regard to the incorrigible and benighted Philistine, "He must die in his sins".

It was my privilege, as an undergraduate, to study rather extensively, for a Classicist, in certain sciences. While pursuing these studies I was constantly surprised and gratified to observe how much my Classics helped me both in mastering and in remembering scientific nomenclature (which is so largely, of course, of Greek and Latin origin) and also how much assistance they gave me in the preparation of clear and accurate reports on all that I studied. Further it was impossible not to notice that my fellow students who were ignorant of Latin and Greek, or poorly grounded therein, were groping in profound darkness amidst the scientific terminology. To them every writer in science was truly a *Ἡράκλειτος σκοτεινός*. In the written and spoken language of these students there was a deplorable poverty of vocabulary and an incredible inability to express themselves with precision and clearness. It was then, too, that I discovered that my best teachers in the sciences had studied the Classics and that the scientific literature which was clearest in presentation of thought and most admirable in style was produced by writers who had had the benefit of a classical education.

I have been emphasizing only the practical side of the question and showing that it pays the future man of science to lay a broad foundation, especially in the Classics, both because of the assistance such foundation gives in the acquisition and mastery of the sciences and also because of the substantial help which Latin especially gives in learning modern languages. I say nothing, in the present connection, of the inestimable value to the student of the humanistic training which prevents that very narrow-mindedness of which the specialist in science is so often the unfortunate possessor, which grievous fault the correspondent quoted above so lament-

ably reveals. However much we may deplore the meticulous pettiness and the occasional obnoxious pedantry of a few dry-as-dust pedagogues in the Classics, we are compelled far more frequently to utter laments for those workers and students in the sciences who, owing to early specialization and the study of a narrow scientific curriculum, are totally or in large measure lacking in that Hellenic sweetness and light which mark the possessor of real culture and which only the study of the classical humanities confers.

It is gratifying, nevertheless, to discover many sympathizers in prominent men of science in our Universities, teachers who advocate a classical training as a foundation for their pupils in the sciences. Truly in these men we Classicists have powerful allies in the very camp of the enemy.

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### A MYCENAEAN LION HUNT ILLUSTRATED BY NANDI WARRIORS

The beautiful inlaid work of gold, silver, etc., on bronze, let into one of the sword blades that Schliemann discovered at Mycenae, which is now to be seen in the museum at Athens (see Illustr. 237 in Schliemanns Ausgrabungen in Troja etc., by C. Schuchhardt, the New International Encyclopaedia, under Archaeology, p. 724, etc.), presents a lifelike scene of lion hunting as it was practiced more than three thousand years ago. Four hunters, clad merely in short trousers and armed only with spear and shield (a fifth, with bow and arrow), have brought a lion to bay. Two other lions are seen running away. The first named lion, with a spear point protruding from his flank, has turned upon his assailants and brought one of them to the ground, and is now seen rushing upon the next one, who holding his shield before him is lunging at the lion with his spear, while two other spearmen and an archer are hastening to his assistance. A lively realization of such a scene is now afforded by Theodore Roosevelt's account in *African Game Trails*, 356 ff., of how Nandi warriors, naked except for loin cloths, speared a lion to death. The resemblance is indeed striking: "The warrior threw his spear; it drove deep into the life, for entering at one shoulder it came out of the opposite flank, near the thigh, a yard of steel through the great body. Rearing, the lion struck the man, bearing down the shield, his back arched; and for a moment he slaked his fury with fang and talon. But on the instant I saw another spear driven clear through his body from side to side; and as the lion turned again the bright spear blades darting toward him were flashes of white flame. The end had come. He seized another man, who stabbed him and wrenched loose. As he fell he gripped a spear head in his jaws with such

tremendous force that he bent it double. Then the warriors were round and over him, stabbing and shouting, wild with furious exultation". The author remarks that it was a scene of as fierce interest and excitement as he ever hopes to see. The accompanying illustration—a drawing—shows the lion, with spear protruding from his flank, erect on his hind legs grappling one of the men over his shield. This short lived duel shows particularly well the reality of a very similar scene, represented on a gold entaglio, which was also found at Mycenae (see Schuchhardt, Illustr. 200). Only nine of the sixty or seventy warriors appear in the drawing in Mr. Roosevelt's book; probably a much greater number of men than the five shown on the sword blade actually participated in an ancient lion hunt.

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### A LESSON FROM GRAY'S ELEGY

The interesting article on *The Classical Element in Gray's Poetry* in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 4:58 recalls a short paper in *The Saturday Review* for June 19, 1875, entitled *A Lesson from Gray's Elegy*. The author calls attention to the well-known fact that in the earlier version of his poem Gray had written

Some Village Cato with dauntless Breast  
The little Tyrant of his Fields withstood;  
Some mute inglorious Tully here may rest;  
Some Caesar, guiltless of his Country's Blood.

Later he substituted English names for the Roman: Hampden for Cato, Milton for Tully, Cromwell for Caesar. In commenting upon the change, the writer in *The Saturday Review* points out very clearly two mistakes that are often made both by classical scholars and by critics of English literature.

In the first place the quality of the classical feeling which was so prominent a factor in Gray's own time and in the generation or two before him is frequently misunderstood. To the out and out classicists of the early eighteenth century the 'classic' taste was hardly more than a silly fashion. Cato and Tully and Caesar were considered as vague and superhuman creatures: they were not much more real than Jupiter and Mars and Venus and the rest of the classical literary machinery. The change of names in the stanza of the *Elegy* which has been quoted was a noteworthy advance in taste. But it was a reaction not so much against the classical, as against the exclusively classical. "The exclusive classic taste implied ignorance of non-classic things, but it implied no knowledge of classic things". This sentence gives much insight into pseudo-classicism. It is too often forgotten that the pseudo-classicists did not base reverence on knowledge.

In the second place the writer refutes the popular fallacy which holds that national examples are intrinsically in better taste than classical examples.